AN

ADDRESS

TO

THE P——T,

In Behalf of the

STARVING MULTITUDE.

Pointing out the CAUSES of the

Preſent High Prices of Proviſions:

WITH

Eaſy and Effectual METHODS how to make them Cheap.

LONDON:

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[Price One Shilling.]

To the PUBLIC.

AS to do good, and communicate, is the duty of every individual, permit me to lay before you the following ſheets, which were drawn up during the receſs of a few leiſure hours; and though not decorated with the flowers of Rhetoric, nor the diction of a learned author, yet as they flow from a heart diveſted of any oſtentation but that of ſerving its country, I hope this will excuſe a plain Farmer for venturing to put his thoughts in print, and free him from incurring the cenſure of this learned and critical age: and the more ſo, as it is certainly very viſible that it is now high time to make ſome wholeſome laws to lower the price of proviſions; otherwiſe I can ſee juſt cauſe to dread the conſequence of a famiſhed multitude, by reaſon it is impoſſible to perſuade ſuch to ſtarve peaceably; for hunger is of ſo fierce a nature, that, according to the old proverb, it will break through ſtone walls.

I truſt there are ſome friends to the poorer ſort of mankind who have power and abilities to help them, whoſe feeling hearts will move them to commiſerate their deplorable ſituation, and to prefer public good to private intereſt: Theſe only are the men whoſe countenance and protection is humbly hoped for by

The Old-faſhion'd Farmer.

Who promiſes, that all profits ariſing from the ſale of this pamphlet ſhall be faithfully diſtributed to the poor.

To the PUBLIC.

AN ADDRESS TO The P——T, &c.

Moſt Noble Sirs,

AS it is in behalf of the moſt uſeful part of the ſubjects of this kingdom that I write, I need make the leſs excuſe for my boldneſs in addreſſing this to you, who are the guardians of the poor: You, who extend your care to the beaſts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fiſhes both of our ponds and rivers, will certainly be ready to relieve your fellow-creatures, when you know the great need they have of your aſſiſtance. Gentlemen,

it is the uſeful artificers and labourers whoſe ſufferings cry aloud for a ſpeedy help; and as you are the men who can eaſily give it them, to whom could I addreſs this ſubject more properly? for as the complaint of the induſtrious part of the nation is now ſo general, it is not one, nor two great men, that can relieve them; no, you muſt all lend a helping hand, and then the work will ſoon be done: And if you will but reflect ſeriouſly, and conſider wiſely, you'll find, that the common people are the ſupport of the Great; therefore they are entitled to their protection: For if the common and laborious part of mankind was to ceaſe, by being ſtarv'd to death, or the like, what would become of the Great? who would they have to do their work, and provide them ſuſtenance, and all other neceſſaries? Conſequently, if one is ſo neceſſary to the other, it is then the intereſt of the Great Men to take care of the poor and middling ſort; in whoſe behalf I freely draw my pen. Permit me, therefore, to point out ſome of their grievances, and to give my opinion how they

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may be redreſſed; and may ſome who are more able lend their aſſiſtance.

Firſt, all neceſſary articles that are for the ſupport of life are very dear. Wheat (notwithſtanding Mr. Tull and Monſ. La Roque's new improvements) is, after a good harveſt, and full crop, from five ſhillings and ſix-pence to ſix ſhillings per ſtrike; whereas, within my remembrance, when the old Engliſh manner of husbandry was in vogue, the current prices have been from two ſhillings and two-pence to three ſhillings.

Secondly, Cheeſe (although we have ſo many delicate new French Graſſes introduced amongſt us) is now from twenty-eight ſhillings per hundred to forty ſhillings; whereas, within many of our remembrances, when plain graſs ſeeds were only uſed, it has ſold from twelve ſhillings to eighteen.

Thirdly, Butter is now from ſix-pence per pound to one ſhilling; whereas within theſe twenty years, my wife has ſold in

Coventry market from four-pence per pound to ſix-pence.

Fourthly, Beef and Mutton are now from three-pence to four-pence per pound, whereas I uſed to buy it from one penny three farthings to two-pence halfpenny.

Fifthly, Bacon, another uſeful article in a family, ſells now from ſeven-pence to eight-pence per pound, whereas I have known it from three-pence halfpenny to four-pence.

Sixthly, Fowls are double the price that they were a few years ago; and, in ſhort, Ducks, Geeſe, and every other article of food is greatly advanced in price within my remembrance.

But the price of labour has not advanced in proportion. In many places, I know, it is greatly lowered. To inſtance Coventry, in my neighbourhood; where the manufacturers of ribbons and worſted goods do now, in theſe dear times, work for leſs wages than they did when things were cheap.

cheap. In Birmingham and Wolverhampton it is the ſame, in the hardware trade; and I know of no town of trade but where the workmen's wages are reduced. What wonder to hear manufacturers grumble, when this is the real caſe!

The day-labourer, it is true, hath been advanced in ſome places; but in others, eight-pence and ten-pence per day is the common price in winter, and one ſhilling and beer during harveſt. And how can any reaſonable perſon think that a family can be ſupported out of ſuch gets, eſpecially at this time of diſtreſs?

Now how to remedy all theſe great evils is what I intend to point out. Much hath already been ſaid and done upon this head, but all to very little purpoſe; for altho' our crops of wheat have been exceeding good, and our harveſt and ſeed-time fine, yet it is dear ſtill; and although ſome men have ſo zealouſly purſued the engroſſers of meat and corn, yet little good ariſes from their ſeemingly pious intentions; for, alas! they have been labouring in vain, and

whilſt

whilſt they have pretended to aſſiſt the poor on one hand, they have oppreſſed them with the other. It is true, the landed men pay a double tax now, which their anceſtors never were burdened with; but then, they raiſe their rents now in ſuch a manner, that the like was never before heard of; and this I take to be one great cauſe of our preſent ſufferings: For if the farmer pays twice as much rent for his land as formerly, how can he be expected to ſell as cheap as when rents were low? Is it not viſible, that Gentlemen are now meaſuring their lands, and raiſing their rents, in moſt places? and if ſo, does not this oblige the tenants to ſell their grain, &c. dearer? for how can a tenant pay as much more rent, if he does not ſell his commodities at an advanced price?

Secondly, Moſt landlords are got into a method of tying their tenants from plowing; and this is another great miſchief to the public: For when Gentlemen diſcourage tillage, this cauſes farmers to turn graziers; and when farmers turn graziers, corn

corn muſt certainly become ſcarce. Beſides, farmers have no occaſion to be forced to become graziers; for all who love their eaſe, will naturally embrace that employment, without any obligation from their landlord. Therefore, all Gentlemen, who wiſh well to their country, ſhould encourage the plough.

Thirdly, Incloſing of open fields, and ſuffering the farmers to convert them into paſturage, is another great evil which cries aloud for redreſs: For, when many thouſands of acres of arable lands are (in any one county) converted into paſturage, does not this naturally help to make a ſcarcity of corn?

Fourthly, That abominable and wicked method of adding houſe to houſe, and farm to farm, condemned by God in Holy Writ, is not one of the leaſt evils that wants to be redreſſed: For this depopulating practice not only thins the country of inhabitants, but alſo markets of ſellers, conſequently is one great occaſion of the preſent high price

of

of proviſions. Thus, a ſet of miſerable, covetous landlords, in order to ſave the charge of repairs, hurt both King and people, by depopulating the country in a grievous manner, ſo that ſome pariſhes, which in my time uſed to turn out thirty or forty fine active fellows, famous for moſt manly exerciſes, have now only one overgrown farmer, who, having his land chiefly in grazing, employs not more than three or four men: By which means the King is diſtreſs'd to get ſoldiers, maſters have hard work to get ſervants and labourers, and the poorer ſort can ſcarcely get bread. For, as farms increaſe in ſize, markets muſt decreaſe in ſellers, conſequently the country muſt be depopulated; and as corn gets into fewer hands, it muſt neceſſarily riſe in price; and when one man rents as many farms as uſed to maintain ſix, eight, or ten families, he cannot raiſe ſo many men for ſoldiers, ſervants, &c. as when occupied in the good old-faſhioned way. From hence, it is plain, that the good old maxims of our anceſtors were more beneficial to King and people, than the new-fangled ſchemes of this wou'd-be-thought improving age.

The

The ancient Nobility and Gentry were noted for hoſpitality, and ſetting cheap takes; nothing in their time being ſo deteſtable as a niggard, and racker of tenants. The preſent are noted for what the Great call frugality, in houſekeeping, and making the moſt of their eſtates, by the aforeſaid grievous methods; by which means, farmers are obliged to raiſe the price of every neceſſary article of life that is for the ſupport of others, or elſe ſtarve themſelves: whereas, if the landed Gentlemen would but reflect ſeriouſly, they might ſoon ſee their error, and how to remedy it, without the leaſt hurt to themſelves or their eſtates. For if doubling of rents obliges farmers to double the price of their commodities, what real advantage hath the landlord, who ſpends his income in a generous way? As he is obliged to give twice as much for moſt commodities that he buys, inſtead of reaping advantage from it, he is at more trouble to no purpoſe. But covetous people will not be perſuaded to ſet cheap takes; and becauſe the Duke of R. has augmented his

eſtate, by lately raiſing his tenants, and the Earl of C. Lord G. and many others have done the ſame, therefore moſt others copy after them, ſo that this evil has ſpread itſelf over the nation like an over-flowing torrent, to the hurt and ruin of multitudes: for whilſt the landed men keep raiſing their rents, the farmers are obliged to keep raiſing their commodities, till the poorer ſort are ruined. Thus the parſimony, or frugality of the Great, is the occaſion of the ruin of the whole; whereas if they would but keep up the old ancient Engliſh hoſpitality, and not rack their tenants, things would ſoon alter for the better.

The diſcouragement that many give to plowing, by tying their tenants to lay down their lands into graſs, is a great hurt to the community in general, and no real advantage to the landlord, eſpecially to thoſe who live like Gentlemen, and keep no farm in their own hands: for although it prevents ſome bad tenants from impoveriſhing an eſtate, yet as it helps to make

a ſcarcity of corn, it conſequently is one occaſion of making every other neceſſary article of life dear; therefore hurts the landlord more than it benefits him: beſides, many tenants would give more rent not to be tied from making uſe of the plough, than otherwiſe: for which reaſons it is plain, that it is for the good of landlord as well as tenant, that tillage ought not to be diſcouraged, and that tenants ought not to be tied from plowing one third, or even one half of their farms. Therefore a law might be very proper, to oblige every farmer to keep in tillage one fourth part of all old incloſures; and when corn was at ſix ſhillings per ſtrike, if they were to be obliged to plow one half, it would ſoon reduce the price more effectually, perhaps, than any other method.

Again, the incloſing of open fields has been always look'd upon to be another great cauſe of the dearneſs of proviſions, and has been the occaſion of more diſturbances in this nation than any other thing I ever read of. Yet if Gentlemen would

but regulate this affair properly, incloſing might be rendered very beneficial to the nation in general; but as it is now practiſed, it is very hurtful. The multitudes of acres of land that are converted into paſturage in Nottinghamſhire, Leiceſterſhire, Derbyſhire, Warwickſhire, and Northamptonſhire, ſince the fields have been incloſed in thoſe counties, within theſe twelve years, is aſtoniſhing: for no ſooner is a field incloſed, than the farmers prepare for laying down great part of it with graſs ſeeds. I know many thouſands of acres of land that uſed to produce excellent crops of grain, which now do not produce a buſhel; which alone makes me not wonder at the dearneſs of corn: For if half the corn is not produced in thoſe counties now, as formerly uſed to be, how can any one expect it to be as cheap as heretofore? And although Gentlemen hum the country about their new frenchified improvements, their Jethro Tull's, and their La Roque's new-fangled husbandry; yet the preſent dearneſs of all ſorts of grain, after a good ſeed-time, fine harveſt, and full crop of wheat,

wheat, demonſtrates very plainly, that the country had been ruined if a bad ſeed-time and bad harveſt had happened: for, alas! if wheat muſt be ſo dear after a plentiful and fine harveſt, conſequently it would have been more ſo had we had a bad one. Therefore, either the new improvements do no good, or elſe ſome, or all the evils I have pointed out, do miſchief; for which reaſons they ought ſpeedily to be remedied; more eſpecially this of incloſing open fields, which may eaſily be done, ſo that neither landlord nor tenant ſhall ſuffer.

Do but enact, that the half of every open field ſhall be conſtantly kept in tillage; and this would render incloſing of great uſe and benefit: this would prevent depopulation, increaſe our breed of horſes and cows, and repleniſh the great towns with corn of all kinds: and this would neither cauſe ſuch lands to ſet for leſs rents, nor hurt the tenant; becauſe, on his firſt entry on a farm that is newly incloſed, he muſt ſet up a team; therefore if he is obliged to keep it on foot for a conſtancy,

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it will be no new thing to him; he may keep a dairy and ſome ſheep beſides, and breed a few colts and calves, &c. and not depend wholly on his harveſt. This would make it not ſo fatiguing as an open field farm, although not ſo eaſy as a grazing one. He would have no flitting of horſes, nor running about the fields to find his ſtock, and would have all the encouragement for improvements that open fields are in want of.

Thus, by having a law made to prevent depopulating paſturage, one great grievance would be alleviated; whereas, if farmers are ſuffered to turn their plow land into paſturage, in the manner they now do, the middling ſort of people will be ruined; for the farmer, who rents a new incloſed farm, (if not prevented by law) is ſure to lay down a good part of his land for grazing, few or none being willing to depend upon the plough only, as they are obliged to do in open fields; and if the land turns out good for paſturage, the farmer commonly commences grazier, it being a more genteel,

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as well as leſs hazardous and troubleſome employment: For, in large plow farms, many ſervants and labourers are required, and theſe oft create a deal of trouble and uneaſineſs; but on grazing farms, they are free from all this, two or three men being able to look after five hundred pounds a year, if employ'd in feeding, whilſt forty could ſcarce manage the ſame quantity if kept in tillage.

Therefore, unleſs a law be made to prevent farmers from converting plough land into paſturage, we ſhall ſoon ſee almoſt as many graziers as farmers; and although more meat will come to market than heretofore, yet it will be dearer, and not cheaper; for the old Engliſh proverb is, Horn and Corn always go together; that is, when corn is dear, meat is always ſo; and reaſon and experience convince us that this is true; none being able to point out the time when corn was dear and meat cheap, unleſs a rot happened amongſt the ſheep, which forc'd the graziers to ſell off their dubious ſtock at a low price.

From hence it is plain, that the price of bread

bread corn regulates the prices of moſt other neceſſary articles that are for the ſupport of life; conſequently all thoſe who wiſh well to the proſperity of Old England, ought to endeavour that corn may never exceed a moderate price. But if incloſing goes on, and farmers are ſuffer'd to lay down their land with graſs ſeeds, in the manner they now do, we muſt never expect to ſee corn cheap any more: Therefore all thoſe who give premiums for the finding out new graſs ſeeds, or encourage depopulating paſturage, or tie their tenants from plowing, may be juſtly pronounced the enemies of the common people; and thoſe who rack their tenants, by raiſing their rents, or put in practiſe that pernicious thing of adding farm to farm, are equally culpable. For if the farmers rents are raiſed, conſequently they are obliged to advance the price of their goods; and if two, three, or more ſmall farms are frequently added together, in order to ſave the expence of repairs, &c. then moſt undoubtedly the markets will be thinner of ſellers, conſequently things will be dearer;

for

for it is full markets of farmers that helps to keep corn down, and whenever that neceſſary article is in few hands, it is certain to be dear. Therefore thoſe Gentlemen, who put in practice this pernicious thing of adding farm to farm, do not only incur the curſe pronounced againſt them in Scripture, but alſo ought to be rendered infamous, by reaſon they thin the inhabitants, and raiſe the price of every neceſſary article of life. For is it not evident, that three, four, or five families muſt produce more children than one? Therefore adding farm to farm depopulates the country very much, and alſo helps to keep up the prices of corn, meat, cheeſe, butter, &c. For although there is no leſs land by this practice, yet the produce of ſuch being put into fewer hands, they can eaſier fix what prices they pleaſe. Yea, theſe are the engroſſers, that do more hurt to the public than all others put together. For when a few over-grown farmers, who oft rent, ſome one a whole lordſhip, another a whole pariſh, do, by this means, engroſs the ſame articles into two or three hands, which uſed to be divided amongſt twenty or thirty, what

wonder is it that the price of ſuch commodities advance? For if tradeſmen, by engroſſing any article into few hands, hurt the public by ſo doing; then it is evident, that thoſe Gentlemen, who ſuffer farmers to engroſs farms, are of great hurt to the nation in general, yea and alſo to themſelves; for by thus thinning the country of inhabitants, ſervants and labourers become ſcarce; and by thinning the markets of ſellers, every neceſſary article of life is near double the price as uſual; by which means thoſe Gentlemen, who are not farmers, ſuffer in proportion with the public.

I muſt own, that the Gentlemen and Nobility having ſeen through this, moſt of them have commenced farmers, ſo that inſtead of wanting to buy, they have to ſell; which has been one great reaſon why the wickedneſs of the engroſſers of farms has been winked at; for thoſe who ſhould free the land from theſe horrid engroſſers, do, by the above practice, skreen themſelves from being hurt by them; for which reaſon they ſuffer this evil to increaſe: nea, ſome have not been wanting to praiſe it in a

public

public manner, and even have attempted to ſhew that it is of great utility to the public; when, alas! it is too evident, that this iniquitous practice, of engroſſing of farms, is one of the great evils which is the occaſion of the preſent high price of all ſorts of proviſions; conſequently ought to be immediately aboliſhed, together with ſome other grievances I have before ſpoke of. And that what I ſay is reaſonable, I will refer you to ancient times for a proof, where you may ſee what our wiſe anceſtors thought proper to have done on the like occaſions.

In 1490, Hiſtory informs us, that great quantities of plow lands were converted into grazing, ſo that villages and country towns were left empty; by which means the Church was depriv'd of her tythes, and the King of his moſt valuable ſubjects; Gentlemen increaſed, and induſtry was contracted into a narrow ſphere. To remedy which, and raiſe a ſeminary for ſoldiers, it was enacted, that all houſes of husbandry, that were uſed and occupied with twenty acres of ground and upwards, ſhould be

manured and kept up (in tillage) for ever, together with a competent proportion of (grazing) land to be uſed and occupied with it.

In 1521, another act was made for the further encouragement of tillage, in order to prevent the great converſion of land into paſturage, a practice which the people again began to run into, through the great price that fine horſes bore. This act appointed the immediate Lord of the Fee to take half of any perſon's land who ſhould ſuffer a town, hamlet, or houſe of husbandry to decay, or who ſhould convert tillage into paſturage; and it was commanded, that decayed houſes ſhould be built up again, and that incloſed grounds ſhould be laid open. So far Guthrie, vol. 2, page 925.—And Sir R. Baker, in his Chronicle, obſerves, that this did ſome good; yet not ſo much as it might have done, if Cardinal Wolſey, for his own benefit, had not procured liberty for Great Men to keep up their incloſures, to the oppreſſion of poor men.

In Edward the Sixth's time, incloſing became

became a favourite again, and the Great Men run upon it, as they do now. At this time, the Great Duke of Somerſet loſt the affections of the Rich Men, by oppoſing incloſures, he even laid all the blame upon this practice, and affirmed in Council, " that the ſpirit of diſcontent then ſo viſible in the nation was chiefly, if not ſolely owing to the incloſures which had been made by men of property, in defiance of acts of Parliament, and had turned the poorer people out to ſtarve or rebel."

Soon after this the commons did rebel on account of incloſures: but, upon promiſe from the Government that the grievance of incloſures ſhould be taken away, they became quiet. But the practice of incloſing having continued near threeſcore years, it ſo affected the private property of the members, even of the King's Council, that the Protector could not fulfil his promiſe. It is true, a few public-ſpirited Noblemen, who were above gratifying their own reſentment at the price of their country's calamity, lent him their aſſiſtance, otherwiſe

wiſe it diſquieted extremely all great landlords; as ſee Guthrie, vol. 3, page 32.

After this the Norfolk men broke out into rebellion; whoſe complaints turned chiefly upon incloſures, and the exceſſive price of proviſions. Upon which the Government promiſed that no landed Gentlemen, beyond a certain proportion of yearly rent, ſhould be clothiers, or farmers; that one man ſhould not uſe many occupations, nor have plurality of farms or benefices. Ibid, page 34.

The ſame Hiſtorian obſerves, page 105, that, in the year 1552, the encouragement of paſture, inſtead of arable lands, had, ever ſince the Duke of Somerſet's firſt diſgrace, been a favourite meaſure with the Government, which found its account in it, by the vaſt increaſe of wool. But the lower people continued ſo uneaſy, that about the beginning of this year an inſurrection happened in Buckinghamſhire, on account of the dearth of proviſions.

From hence we may learn what our anceſtors

ceſtors thought concerning engroſſing of farms, and encouraging paſturage; and to every reaſonable man it muſt appear plain, that it is now become abſolutely neceſſary to encourage tillage, in order to keep the poorer ſort of people from ſtarving. And if Gentlemen would ſuffer their tenants in general to plow even a half of all their lands, it would neither hurt the ſame, nor lower their rents; for it is evident, that many farmers, who are now tied by their landlords from plowing, would give more rent to have the liberty of growing ſome corn. Therefore thoſe landlords who tie their tenants from raiſing corn, by obliging them not to plow, are enemies both to themſelves and to their country; conſequently ought to be prevented, by law, from hurting both themſelves and their fellow ſubjects. Whenever tillage hath been diſcouraged, all the neceſſary articles of food have become dear, as Hiſtory plainly proves; therefore, at this time of real ſcarcity, the plough ought to be the favourite, and all thoſe who diſcourage it may truly be look'd upon as profeſs'd enemies of the poor.

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Another great evil that our anceſtors guarded againſt was, the engroſſing of farms; an evil which is now ſo general, that, if not timely prevented, will ſoon depopulate the country and ſtarve the manufacturers. For many places which I could point out, which uſed to be occupied by four, five, ſix, nay ſome ten or a dozen families, are now in the hands of one man, who raiſes, upon ſome of theſe, neither colt nor calf; for the common method of theſe engroſſing farmers is to commence graziers, and to raiſe no ſtock, except ſheep; and this is one great reaſon why horſes and cows are ſo extravagantly dear. When little farms were common, then cattle of all kinds were moderately cheap, becauſe moſt ſmall farmers raiſed a young ſtock, ſo that inſtead of wanting to buy, they had to ſell: whereas the occupiers of large grazing farms have a freſh ſtock to buy in every year: conſequently, when the ſmall farms are added together to make a large grazing one, the price of ſtore cattle will advance.

But

But this is not the only evil that ariſes from this pernicious practice of adding farm to farm: Alas! this wicked thing is productive of moſt of the evils under which the poorer ſort of people now groan.

This makes but few hands to be employed in the country; conſequently depopulates it, and fills great towns with poor.

This makes thin markets of farmers; conſequently raiſes the price of moſt articles that ſuch have to ſell.

This horrid cuſtom is the chief cauſe why bread, meat, beer, butter, cheeſe, and bacon, are ſo exceſſive dear; which I fully made appear in a letter to the public ſome time ſince; therefore have leſs occaſion to inſiſt on it here. On large grazing farms, their chief dependence is on cattle and ſheep for the butcher, therefore raiſe neither butter, cheeſe, bacon, barley, nor wheat; conſequently, as grazing farms increaſe, ſuch articles muſt become more dear; and that this is one great cauſe why ſuch proviſions are ſo very dear, none can deny.

Another evil is produced from this pernicious practice of engroſſing of farms, which is almoſt unnoticed; that is, it prevents farmers ſervants from marrying, becauſe they have no proſpect how to maintain a family. When ſmall farms were plenty, if John and Kate, who had liv'd in ſervice ſome time, and had ſav'd thirty or forty pounds, happened to take each other for better or for worſe, they, with ſuch a ſum, could ſtock a ſmall take, which would keep a cow or two; and by the help of this, with what they could otherwiſe earn, they could raiſe up a family of uſeful and induſtrious children: whereas, now ſuch takes are become ſcarce, and a ſervant man has no other proſpect but to become a day-labourer, this oft prevents him entering into the marriage ſtate: conſequently, as ſmall farms fill the country with inhabitants, they are of great utility both to King and Country; and thoſe who add them together, in order to ſave repairs, ought to be prevented from ſuch a pernicious practice.

In anſwer to this, the engroſſing farmer

ſays,

ſays, that a man who rents a ſmall take of twenty or thirty pounds per year, commonly eats or conſumes in his family the whole produce of ſuch take; therefore what would great towns do in a ſcarce time, was it not for great farmers ſaving large ricks againſt ſuch emergencies?

To this I anſwer, that although the ſmall farmer does conſume the whole produce of his take in his own family, yet ſuch are of greater utility to this trading nation than great graziers: for as neceſſity obliges thoſe who rent ſmall farms, to bring the produce of ſuch to market, in order to enable them to purchaſe ſuch things as are needful, therefore the markets are ſure to be full of theſe farmers, who muſt ſell, let the price be what it will, becauſe they want the money to lay out, which circulates in trade immediately; whilſt the great farmers can keep their corn, &c. out of market, until it will fetch ſuch a price as they chuſe to ſell it at. Yea, the great farmers, now-a-days, can fix the prices of their grain, and if the baker and maltſter will not buy, they can ſtarve them into a

compliance; whereas, when the markets were full of thoſe farmers who rented ſmall takes, the buyers had it in their power to fix prices, and neceſſity obliged the farmers to ſell Many bakers and maltſters can now teſtify, that they remember the times when the farmers uſed to beg of them to look at their ſamples of corn; whereas times are ſo altered, that they are obliged now to ask complaiſantly for a ſight of Mr. Gripus's ſample, who oft haughtily ſays, "I don't want to ſell; therefore bid boldly, or elſe return my ſample immediately." And that this is no joke, but the real caſe in moſt markets, is but too evident. Therefore thoſe Gentlemen who lay their ſmall farms together, are very great enemies both to King and Country, becauſe they not only thin the country of inhabitants, but alſo cauſe all neceſſary articles of life to be dear, by reducing the number of ſellers.

Beſides, as it is evident that grazing is now become the darling object of the landlords in general, who uſe all methods to diſcourage tillage, even ſuch as tying their

tenants

tenants from plowing, &c. therefore the whole blame does not lie on the exporters of corn, nor the diſtillers of ſuch, but chiefly on the covetous and ſelf-intereſted landlords: for if the landlords would let their eſtates in ſmall farms, and give encouragement to the plow, there would ſoon be plenty of corn, both for foreign trade and the diſtillers. I ſuppoſe I need not demonſtrate the great uſe of exporting corn, by reaſon every one muſt ſee that ſuch enriches the nation greatly, by being ſold in foreign markets for ready money; and I apprehend that the more the diſtillers uſe, the more his Majeſty gets by the exciſe; but the great graziers lodging their money in the funds, may make ſome recompence for his loſs on that head; and trade being now carried on chiefly by paper credit, may be one reaſon why we don't want foreign gold for our corn, as heretofore. But let this be as it will, it is but too evident that we want corn for our own uſe, and that after the fineſt harveſt, and beſt crop, that has been known for many years, I mean of wheat in general.

And

And this only is ſufficient to prove that too little land is in tillage: for where ground enough is till'd to maintain a nation, with only a moderate crop; conſequently, if the ſame quantity of land was to produce a good crop, it would cauſe plenty.

Not many years backwards, corn has been cheap, although the crops were not excellent; but ſince then, thouſands of acres have been converted into depopulating paſturage, which conſtantly uſed to be in tillage. A man that rents a large farm will naturally lay down a great part of it, if it is incloſed, and fit for grazing; whilſt thoſe who rent ſmall farms, will plow ſome (if it is incloſed) in order to get litter for their cattle, and corn for the family, and the open-field farmer muſt plow the whole. Therefore, adding farm to farm is very hurtful, nay, I may venture to ſay, abominable both to God and man; as witneſſeth the fifth chapter of Iſaiah, and the eighth verſe, where the great men of the Jews have a wo pronounced againſt them for this abominable practice; for thus ſaith the prophet: "Wo

unto

unto them that join houſe to houſe, and lay field to field, till there be no place—" to wit, for the poor to dwell in, as ſaith the annotations in the Bible printed in 1599. Alas! if God pronounced a wo, by the mouth of his Prophet, againſt the great men of the Jews, who were his peculiar people, what think you would ſuch a Prophet ſay, was he to live in this avaricious and ſelf-intereſted age? And although there is no ſuch Man to denounce againſt the great ſelf-lovers of theſe days, yet thoſe who believe the Scriptures ought to tremble, if they are guilty of adding farm to farm, or forcing the poor from their dwellings, by incloſing, &c. For if God ſpar'd not his own peculiar people, but puniſhed them for theſe offences, neither will he ſpare you, O ye great and rich men, if ye are guilty of the like. Therefore for once ſhew yourſelves wiſe, (before abſolute neceſſity obliges you) by reviving ſome of the good old laws againſt the engroſſing of farms: and if ye will perſiſt in incloſing, make a law to oblige the occupiers of land to plow a certain quantity every

every year: for the great benefit that accrues to the public from open fields is, that great part of ſuch are certain to be ſowed with ſome ſort of grain every year; whereas, when they are incloſed, the farmer can do as he pleaſes. Therefore if a law was made, and inforced, that no one man ſhould rent above one hundred pounds per annum; and that out of every twenty acres he ſhould plow five, meadows excepted; and that thoſe who rent new incloſed land ſhould plow one half; then the country would ſoon be full of inhabitants, markets would be crowded with ſellers, and plenty would be the glorious reward of ſuch wiſe regulations; the farmers money would then circulate in trade; and the Gentleman would not ſet his land at any great diſadvantage, repairs excepted; and he would be well enabled to do that, as he could then buy every article of houſekeeping at a moderate price. Thus by the Great Men doing good to the poor, they would even help themſelves.

In King Henry the Eighth's time, Hiſtory informs us, that there was juſt occaſion

to

to dread a ſcarcity, becauſe fine horſes bore a great price; and, in order to prevent it, a law was made, to hinder farmers from converting tillable land into paſturage. Now if it was reaſonable for our anceſtors to dread a ſcarcity, becauſe fine horſes ſold extravagantly dear, certainly we have great occaſion to dread one; for not only fine horſes ſell very dear, but even all other ſorts of cattle. Therefore if the high price which fine horſes fetch'd in 1521 was enough to induce farmers to convert their plow land into grazing, then moſt certainly the high price which horſes, cows, ſheep, &c. now bear, will induce many farmers to lay down their plow lands into grazing: nay, it is very viſible that this has been done, and is now the practice of moſt farmers who rent inclos'd farms. Beſides, as moſt of thoſe who rent feeding land breed no ſtock, and the adding farm to farm having made many large graziers, theſe are the reaſons why horſes, cows, &c. are ſo very dear.

The graziers complain, and ſay that they are now obliged to give twice as

much for a bullock, or cow, to feed, as they did twenty or thirty years ago; and I have heard ſome of them expreſs their ſurprize at ſuch an extraordinary advance; when, alas! the reaſon why it is ſo, is as plain as poſſible: for within theſe twenty years ſuch numbers of fields have been incloſed, and converted into paſturage, and ſo many ſmall farm houſes gone to decay, and the farms added to others, that there has been a greater demand for cattle to feed than uſed to be; and as the ſmall farmers, who were moſtly breeders of cattle, are now no more, and the lands are converted generally into feeding, conſequently this muſt enhance the price of ſtock; for if twice as many cattle are now wanted to ſtock the grazing farms, as were twenty years ago, then, unleſs twice as many are raiſed, the price of them muſt riſe in proportion to the demand; and when the breeding farms are every year reduced, the conſequence muſt be, that cattle of all kinds will riſe in price.

Therefore in order to remedy this, do but make a law, to prevent depopulating paſturage,

paſturage, and let ſmall farms be as plenty as heretofore, and then we ſhall ſoon have all neceſſaries of life at moderate prices. This will alſo have another good effect; we ſhall then have a chance to get good ſervants; for the ſmall farmers were the people that uſed to ſtock the country with the beſt of ſervants: theſe were the nurſeries for breeding up induſtrious and virtuous young men and women; whereas the generality of ſervants, now-a-days, are ſuch as have had but little opportunity of learning how to do buſineſs ſo as to be fit to make good ſervants; for the labourer cannot be expected to be able to give his children that learning which is proper to fit them for good places; whilſt thoſe who rent ſmall farms have generally wherewithal to give their children learning ſufficient to qualify them to read virtuous books, and to know how to behave in a proper and decent manner. Beſides, the girls have opportunities of learning at home how to brew, bake, cook, knit, ſow, and get up linnen, &c. whereas poor people's children have not ſuch advantages. Therefore the

decay of ſmall farms is one great reaſon of the immorality of the preſent age, as well as the cauſe why good ſervants are ſcarce, and proviſions dear; conſequently, as adding farm to farm is productive of ſo many real evils to the nation in general, an immediate ſtop ought to be put to that pernicious practice.

There is another practice which ſome farmers uſe, that I muſt beg leave to mention, that is, the laying down open fields into paſturage. I know many places where the fields are divided into three or four parts, one of which is laid down with graſs ſeeds every year. This cauſes a deal leſs corn to be brought to market than otherwiſe would be, providing thoſe fields were plow'd, as formerly they uſed to be.

And as all the aforeſaid cauſes naturally decreaſe the growth of corn, how can it ever be expected to be cheap unleſs ſome or all of them are removed?—I want not to give laws to my countrymen; therefore leave it to you, who are the chief rulers, to do that which you ſhall judge to be the

moſt

moſt proper. If any of the hints that I have given ſhould prove of any ſervice to the poor, I have all my deſire, for it is for them alone that I have given myſelf and you this trouble.

But before I conclude, I ſhall take ſome ſmall notice of the dreſſing-mills, which I imagine to be another thing which helps to hurt the poor. For the dreſſing millers buy ſuch large quantities of corn, that if three or four of them come to a market together, the very ſight of theſe men will oft cauſe the farmers to raiſe the price of their wheat; and if the markets are thin, and the millers out of ſtock, and under a neceſſity of buying, this oft gives ſuch an alarm amongſt the farmers, that I have known ſeveral markets advance price greatly, for no other ſeeming cauſe than the dreſſing millers eagerneſs to buy. Laſt Michaelmas was twelvemonth, I came to Worceſter market, after having been in Northamptonſhire, Leiceſterſhire, and Warwickſhire: One of theſe men ask'd me, how wheat ſold in the markets that I had been at that week? I told him, that in North-

Northamptonſhire it was at ſeven ſhillings to ſeven ſhillings and four-pence per ſtrike; in Leiceſterſhire ſeven ſhillings; and Warwickſhire, ſix ſhillings and ſix-pence to ſeven ſhillings. Upon which he ſaid he would that day buy five hundred bags, if he could. Accordingly I ſaw him buy a great quantity whilſt I ſtaid, from four ſhillings and ten-pence per ſtrike to five ſhillings and two-pence. This gave the alarm to the farmers, and the market roſe immediately. Now before theſe mills were ſo much in vogue, the old-faſhion'd millers ſeldom could buy any great quantities; their chief dependence was upon the bakers and farmers, for whom they uſed to grind for ſo much toll. Therefore as the dreſſing millers are now ſo plenty, it might not be improper to put them under ſome reſtrictions, becauſe whatever raiſes the price of corn hurts the poorer ſort of people; it is they upon whom the greateſt part of the burden falls.

If the poor, therefore, are worth any body's notice, it is now high time to do ſomething in their behalf: and if by making

ing good and wholeſome laws to encourage the plow, land ſhould fall price a little, yet this would in the end be no hurt to the landed intereſt in general, but, on the contrary, when the uſeful articles of houſe-keeping once again become moderately cheap, your Gentlemen of two or three hundred pounds a year would be enabled to live well; whereas now, Gentlemen of ſuch eſtates have great difficulties to appear as ſuch, and pay their way properly; whilſt the graziers and great farmers live like Gentlemen. Therefore as there are more Gentlemen of ſmall eſtates, than there are who poſſeſs large ones, it is plain that the making of laws to cauſe proviſions to be cheap, will be of great uſe to the major part of the Gentlemen, as well as to the poorer ſort of people. For which reaſon, no time ſhould be loſt, but you, Gentlemen in P——t, ſhould ſet about this great and good work immediately: for as our danger is great, certainly you ought to be expeditious in applying a proper remedy; but more eſpecially ſo, when it is ſo near at hand, ſo eaſy to be come at, as is ours of the Plow, which will effectually

do the deed: do but encourage this uſeful inſtrument, and put a ſtop to the dangerous practices before cited, and then we ſhall ſoon feel the happy effects of your wiſe regulations. And if the unwiſe landlords, &c. will ſquander away their fortunes at horſe-races, and gaming-tables, let them be prevented from retrieving them at the expence of the public. Loſſes at gaming oft render men deſperate, ſo that they will either fleece their tenants, or the public, to recruit themſelves; and I fear this has been one great reaſon why ſo many evil things have been done in theſe gambling days. But, nevertheleſs, it is not too late to amend; we will ſtill hope for the beſt; and may God incline all your hearts, who now ſit in Par——t, to do thoſe things which you ought to do, is the humble requeſt of your Petitioner,

The Old-faſhion'd Farmer.

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

As you, Gentlemen, have made ſuch ample proviſion for hares and partridges, who, in ſome places, eat great quantities of thoſe farmers corn who are not allowed one farthing for it, nor are they ſuffered to kill one under the penalty of paying five pounds, although they only maintain them; therefore if it is no hardſhip for a farmer to be obliged to feed hares and partridges, without having the liberty of killing the produce of his own lands, certainly it would be none, to oblige him to plow a certain proportion of his land every year, to prevent his poor neighbours periſhing with hunger. Beſides, if the preſervation of hares and partridges be ſo important, as to become a parliamentary concern, then undoubtedly the preſervation of the poor manufacturers and labourers is more important, therefore they ought to be immediately aſſiſted, and, for the future, ſhould be prevented from ſtarving by ſome wholeſome laws to encourage the plow, and prevent depopulating paſturage. For when

farmers are obliged to plow, they are alſo under ſome neceſſity of raiſing a young ſtock of cattle to eat their ſtraw; ſo that when tillage is encouraged, that cauſes plenty both of bread, meat, and drink; but when paſturage is the favourite, as it is too much at this day, then all things that ſupport life advance price in proportion to what ground is laid down for grazing.

Therefore, as grazing is ſo deſtructive to the common people, the growth of it ought to be ſtopt; for although we have many more fat cattle kill'd than uſual, yet as the graziers, on their increaſe, are obliged to give near as much for lean ones, as they twenty years ago ſold fat ones for, this plainly demonſtrates, that let grazing increaſe ever ſo, yet inſtead of lowering the price of meat, this depopulating and pernicious practice will, on the contrary, advance it: For how can the graziers live, if they ſell their fat cattle for leſs money to the butcher than they buy them in for? Therefore as ſtore cattle riſe price in proportion to the demand that there is for them, conſequently whatever increaſes this

demand

demand will, inſtead of lowering the price of meat, on the contrary, advance it; and experience proves, that the more graziers increaſe, the dearer meat ſells.

I myſelf have bought as good barren cows for three pounds three ſhillings per head, to feed, as are now ſold for five pounds; and I have ſold them out, when I had fed them fat, for five pounds, and five pounds ten ſhillings: whereas now, the grazier, who buys in at five pounds per head ſuch as he uſed to buy for about three, is under a neceſſity of ſelling them out again, when fat, at ſix or ſeven pounds, or elſe he muſt loſe by his buſineſs. Therefore there is no demonſtration more evident than the following, viz.

That the more land there is laid down for feeding cattle, the dearer fat cattle will be.

And, the more land there is in tillage, the more ſtock of cattle will be raiſed, and the cheaper they will be.

Conſe-

Conſequently as encouraging grazing advances the price of bread, corn, malt, and meat, thoſe who are guilty of it are enemies to their country: for all which reaſons, farmers ought to be obliged to plow, and Gentlemen ſhould be prevented from adding farm to farm, and tying their tenants from plowing.

F I N I S.

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